does not at all settle the question as to Low we may come to know what these principles are, so as to be entitled to use them in ethical science. It is quite true that they act spontaneously prior to and apart from any observation of their exercise, but we are not at liberty to make a reflex use of them till we have carefully determined their nature as a matter of fact. They operate *a priori* and independent of experience, but *a posteriori* investigation of our experience is necessary in order to the detection of their law or rule.

Virtue or moral good is not natively known by the mind as an abstract or general idea. Nor is the ethical principle, which we acknowledge to be in our constitution, before the consciousness as a principle. In the natural progress of knowledge, physical and moral, the mind begins with the individual and the concrete, and by these it reaches the general and the abstract. Just as no man ever yet saw a law of nature—all that we see are individual facts falling out according to law, so no man can be conscious of ethical principle—all that he discovers by the internal sense is a particular decision of the moral power. We arrive at a knowledge of a law of nature by the generalization of the facts presented to the senses, and we can attain an acquaintance with ethical principle only by an induction of the facts revealed by consciousness. He who would use natural law in the construction of physical science, must be prepared to enunciate its nature; and the same condition should be imposed on ethical investigation—he who employs moral law for scientific ends must be ready to shew what is its place in our moral constitution. Not only so, but in scientific investigation it is required that we categorically declare the precise rule of the law employed. If we proceed to rear a system on an imperfectly inducted or an imperfectly represented law, we may find ourselves landed in ever increasing errors as we advance. The astronomer, for example, would be involved in ever multiplying blunders, provided he represented the law of gravitation as varying inversely according to the distance, instead of the square of the distance. But moralists are landed in far more serious mistakes when they set out with a wrong or even a mutilated view of ethical principle. For example, errors with far-reaching consequences spring up, when it is affirmed that moral good is merely a far-sighted self-love, or a refined love of happiness, or that it has its foundation solely in the sentiments of the percipient mind, for we cannot, under such systems, speak of righteousness as an essential perfection of God. But mental laws when thus inductively determined may be regarded as primary principles, sanctioned by the very structure of the mind in which they are placed, nay, as authorized by the God of truth who hath planted them there, and may be subjected to intellectual analysis, and used deductively in all ethical investigations. We may now construct an ethical philosophy made up of *a priori* principles, but these ascertained by *a posteriori* induction.

Ethics is the science of the necessary laws of our moral nature, just as logic is

the science of the necessary laws of our thinking nature. In both, the laws are in themselves *a priori* and independent of experience, but in both they can be ascertained only by *a posteriori* induction. We have indicated the grounds which render it necessary that we should proceed in this manner ;—first, there are no *a priori* ideas before the mind as abstract or general ideas ; and secondly, there are no *a priori* principles before the consciousness as principles. Hence it is, that while native principles of thought and morality operate *spontaneously*, we are not entitled to make a *reflex* or scientific use of them till we have enunciated their nature and rule in a precise formula. This distinction, so obvious when stated, is lost sight of altogether in those *a priori* speculations which are flooding us from